

QUERIES

RELATING TO

THE BOOK OF COMMON-PRAYER, &c.

ADDRESSED TO

Those in AUTHORITY.

*By the Rev^d. Francis Wallaston
Rector of Chichester, Kent*

[Price One Shilling.]

Q. U. R. I. S.

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THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN

IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

SHALL HAVE THE HONOUR TO PRESENT

A PETITION OF THE

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IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

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RELATING TO

THE BOOK OF COMMON-PRAYER, &c.

With PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

ADDRESSED TO

Those in AUTHORITY,

AND SUBMITTED TO THEIR CONSIDERATION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILKIE, No. 71, St. Paul's
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LONDON:

Printed by J. G. Smith, No. 25, Pall Mall.

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QUERIES, &c.

ADDRESSED

To Those in AUTHORITY.

MAY it please You, to whom it belongs to direct the Affairs of this Nation, to peruse with christian charity the following pages; which are dictated by a sincere love of christian truth.

When applications have been made for amendments in some of our ecclesiastical forms; the reply has often been (and is still repeated) that *the request was too GENERAL*, and that *PARTICULARS were not pointed-out to your consideration*. With what view this has been done, God, and the consciences of those who did it, can best tell. But since that deference to your judgements, which withheld the appliers from specifying their wishes, has been

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objected

objected to them as a *fault* ; you must now pardon the presumption of one (who indeed has long been a well-wisher, and not merely a well-wisher in secret, to amendments in our forms ; and stands now unconnected, and will involve no one in his errors) when he *amends* his fault ; and lays before you, in more express terms, *his wishes*. And he thinks he cannot state them in a way less offensive to you, or more becoming the respect that is always due from a private man to the public ; than by submitting them in the form of *Queries*, and without a name, to your consideration. Whatever his sentiments may be, they will not then appear to be confidently obtruded upon others. You will answer the questions to yourselves, according to your own sense of the case. Whatever amendments he shall hint, you will admit or reject as you shall conceive them respectively to deserve. All he requests is only ; that you will give that serious attention to his proposal which such a cause has a right to claim, and will pass an impartial judgement upon it, and let that judgement be followed by a consequent conduct.

IN the first place then, he must beg leave to propose a few preliminary questions ; the answers to which may serve as *Data*, whereon to found the rest of what he has to offer : and above all this leading one,

WHETHER, at least, equal attention be not requisite to our *ecclesiastical* as to our *civil* concerns?

Whether you would think it right, to let the laws of our *civil government* stand as they did in the times of King Charles II. without ever altering or amending them? And whether, on the contrary, we have not seen them attended to constantly ever since, and watched over in parliament from year to year, from day to day, as occasion has offered: while the *concerns of religion* have been left to continue now from century to century, on the very same footing they were in those leis happy days; the single act of Toleration alone excepted? That indeed did not take place till after the Revolution. But the attempts that were made that same year, testify, that some farther amendment was thought wanting even then: and the sentiments which our prelates and divines have often expressed, both in public and private, during the long interval ever since, and the pressing solicitations that have been made of late, shew that the evil still encreases. May it please you then to consider,

WHETHER this does not cry aloud for your regard now?

Your present Articles declare (what every protestant will allow to be true) that "every particular or national church hath authority to ordain,

“ change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the
 “ church, ordained only by man’s authority; so
 “ that all things be done to edifying.” (See Art.
 34.) May it not then be asked,

WHETHER that authority be lost now? and when?
 and how? And then farther;

WHETHER our Liturgy and Articles, and the
 Subscriptions and Declarations now required
 concerning them, were not ordained by man’s
 authority? And whether it be any disparage-
 ment to a human composition to declare it
 not absolutely perfect: or a crime in any one
 to point out its blemishes in order to their
 amendment?

WHETHER it could be stiled a destruction of the
 present fabric, or even an endeavour to sub-
 vert the established church, to propose amend-
 ments in it: or whether that church would
 not be more firmly established by acceding to
 such as are reasonable?

WHETHER such amendments as most would agree
 in asking, and such as most would agree might
 be admitted without prejudice to christianity,
 might not be looked upon as reasonable?

WHETHER then it might not be right, that a Com-
 mission should be appointed to enquire into
 these

these matters, and judge what is *reasonable*, what *necessary*; either by his Majesty's immediate command; or by an address from either or both houses of parliament desiring it of him, or by the parliament's taking them under consideration itself, or by the convocation's being empowered to do it: or by whatever method it be seen fitting,

Whether it be not *necessary* for the good of religion, and, indeed, the peace of mankind, that *something* be done now; when matters are apparently come to a crisis, and religion is seen to suffer daily by our delay?

THESE things being premised in *general*, the following *particulars* (since particulars are called for) shall be submitted to your consideration.

And, first, concerning our **LITURGY**, as being seemingly of most general concern.

In relation to this it may be asked,

I. WHETHER we should wish to make it such as to reconcile it to the dissenters, and admit them entirely among us; or, laying aside that christian thought,

II. WHETHER only to alter our several offices, so as to adapt them to the present use of our church,

church; which now joins many of them together, as they were at first accommodated to the use of the times in which they were framed; or,

III. WHETHER to shorten the service on some occasions, where it appears too long for the devotion of the present generation; or,

IV. WHETHER to do merely what is absolutely necessary, for the comfort of those who officiate and do join in it, and for the better edification of the hearers?

The *First* of these, it may be seen, is the wish of the author. However that may be objected to by persons of narrow minds; he must confess that it would be the joy of his heart to see that effected. The practice of divines, indeed, has been thought to run too generally the contrary way; who have studied usually to exclude from their communion, all those who differ from them in sentiment. But if he differs from those divines, and be a heretic in this, he cannot, he desires not, to help it: He "has not so learned Christ."

Yet, though to propose this might in these days be thought chimerical, and to effect it would at first sight be called impossible; he must refer it to the learned judicious and candid,

WHETHER

WHETHER it would not be most christian to ~~at-~~
tempt it; at least as far as we may?

Indeed, the Dissenters in the last century objected totally to any kind of Liturgy, any prescribed form of worship: and to those who shall do so now, we cannot yield. But if there be some parts in our service, that are not absolutely necessary; some forms or ceremonies of mere human appointment, and which we allow to be indifferent; and others which we cannot pretend are indispensable; it may be worthy a christian's consideration,

WHETHER those might not safely, whether they ought not charitably to be removed, if they offend others; lest we forfeit that character which is, without all question, indispensable in the disciples of Christ?

As to the *Second*; there can be no dispute but that, if our Liturgy be not adapted to the present use, it must be right to do it.

The *Third* will seem to admit of a doubt. But if its connexion with the second be considered, that will perhaps vanish.

And as to the *Fourth*; it merely returns to the original Question, Whether any thing be wanting? which was supposed granted.

However; since it is possible for us to have all these several objects in view together, and it must
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certainly be most desirable that we should; they will be found blended in the following proposals: which shall be stated promiscuously as they arise, and submitted, jointly and severally, to the better judgements and deeper knowledge of those to whom it appertains to decide upon them.

LET it be considered then, as what first presents itself in our Prayer-book,

WHETHER it would not tend to edification, to amend or new-model our CALENDAR; both in the *ordinary course*, and for *Sundays*?

In the *Ordinary course* of First Lessons,

WHETHER the Apocryphal ones ought not wholly to be laid aside? They are certainly no part of what we allow to be the Canon of Scripture; and though some of them may be read “for example of life and instruction of manners,” yet are there many discourses of our own divines much more instructive; but which ought not to be introduced into the place of Scripture, and much less as a part of it.

WHETHER, besides those chapters of holy Scripture itself which are now omitted, some others might not be omitted also; a few of them being repetitions, and others less useful or less intelligible to the common hearer?

WHETHER it be necessary to have particular Lessons selected for the Saints' days; many of those we now have, being Apocryphal, and seeming to have no relation at all to the day on which they are appointed?

WHETHER, after throwing out the Apocryphal lessons, the lessons for Saints' days, the few chapters that are repetitions, and the many that are utterly inedifying to the unlearned, and only fit for the private studies of the learned; a regular course might not be chosen from the Old Testament; which should be read through twice in the year in cathedrals, and places where there is service twice a day; and once regularly where there is service only once?

The Second Lessons in the *ordinary course*, perhaps scarcely need any alteration: unless the chapters in the Epistles could be divided better; or it should be thought proper to omit some of them. But these would occur only where there is constant service twice a day, if what is proposed next should be approved of.

THE Lessons for *Sundays*, it is wished, might be considered in another light from what they appear now. In many country parishes there can be no service but on the Lord's day; in all, whether city or country, we know the poor cannot and the rich will not attend on any other: and therefore

it deserves a thought; Whether our great aim should not be, to render the whole service of that day as intelligible, as instructive, and as complete in itself as may be possible. To this end it is with submission asked,

WHETHER the First Lessons for Sundays might not be better chosen: as some of the present are liable to be misunderstood, and others (particularly out of the prophets) are utterly unintelligible to the unlearned; nay, frequently the chapter appointed is less to be understood, than the preceding or subsequent one? Whether this might not be amended; either by carrying on some historical chain through the Old Testament, from week to week throughout the year; or by one series for the mornings and another for the evenings, as they are often (perhaps usually) different sets of parishioners that attend on those different parts of the day; or in any other way that shall be thought more conducive to edification, and the furtherance of true piety, which should be the grand object of all our labours?

WHETHER the Second Lessons might not be carried on from Sunday to Sunday in some regular series likewise; instead of taking them from the ordinary course as they happen to fall?

WHETHER this might not be some small inducement to people's regular attendance, at least at first;

first; and whether they might not at all times reap profit from it? St. Luke and the Acts are one continued history, written by the same Evangelist; and contain just 52 Chapters; which might serve for the mornings through the year. St. Matthew and St. John would nearly compleat the evenings. And it is submitted to consideration, whether it would not be very desirable, to have some parts at least of the Gospels read in course as a second lesson at the evening prayers; because those whose situation does not permit them to attend in the forenoon, never hear a word of that, which is the foundation of their religion, read to them at all in the present method, as part of the evening service; when, instead of being instructed in the history of the birth and life and death and pure doctrine of our Saviour himself, they frequently hear only a small and imperfect portion of an argument from one of the Epistles, as chance shall throw it in their way, which without its connexion is scarcely intelligible to the reader himself; and that connexion is never read to them in the Sunday course till many months, often not till a year or two afterwards.

This indeed appears a great change. But when it is considered that a new *Calendar* can

hurt no one's devotion, it is hoped it will not be found impracticable or improper.

In this method the Gospel of St. Mark seems wholly to be omitted; as also the Epistles. But, since there is only the 7th chapter of that Evangelist (and not even the whole of that chapter) but what is contained in St. Luke, or read already among the Gospels of the day; that omission must be looked upon as unimportant: more especially when it is considered; that all those Gospels which are now taken from St. Luke, must then be removed; and would make way for others, such as shall be seen proper.

And as to the Epistles; all, but the purely argumentative parts of them, are (or may be) comprised among the Epistles of the day; which now seem to want a little better arrangement; and which, by the omission of some, and the enlargement of other very small portions now in use, would comprehend all of the Epistles that need be read to a mixt congregation.

FROM the *Calendar* it seems natural to go to the PSALMS: concerning which it merits consideration,

WHETHER the reading of them promiscuously from end to end as they occur, be a proper method? Whether some of them, as they stand, be fit to be put into the mouths of a christian congregation? And whether it might not be better

better to select such of them, or such parts of them, as are most fitting; and to omit the rest? Or, if it can be thought necessary, in cathedrals, and where there is service every day, to retain the whole; whether a set might not be chosen for the Sundays?

In an Abridgment of the Common-Prayer, lately printed, (which indeed curtails the service more than may perhaps be thought desirable) there seem to have been no small pains taken with the Psalms; a set of hymns compiled out of them, being there given for every day, with as little disturbance of the order as may be. How far that may be allowable, must be submitted to better judgements. But that these portions would be fitter to be used in christian worship, than the present method, can admit of no dispute: especially, if some parts of the translation were amended; which the author of that work seems not to have presumed to offer at in any.

As allied to the same subject, it may be asked, WHETHER the *Benedicite*, the latter part of the *Benedictus*, the *Magnificat*, and the *Nunc dimittis*, be quite proper? And yet, as it is left to the discretion of the officiating minister to omit any of these, and to use another there appointed in its stead, this is of the less importance.

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Here also might very pertinently be added another question,

WHETHER a *New Translation of the Bible* be not much wanted? Whether any capital heathen author, has been so neglected by the learned for half a century; as this more capital and divine work, the foundation of our faith and all our hopes, has been neglected by our Church for above three times that space*? Or if that be not owing to negligence merely, but rather to veneration for the present version; whether such veneration be not altogether as weak and superstitious as that of the Papists for the Latin Vulgate?

The translating of the Old Testament indeed, it is apprehended, might better be deferred till the learned labours of Dr. Kennicott shall have ascertained the reading of the original Text; which in some passages may be elucidated thereby. But this does not relate at all to the New Testament; which was so examined several years ago. Whenever that work shall be accomplished (or whether a new Translation be undertaken or not) it is submitted to the public,

* The last Translation now in use was made 1607. Have we made no alterations in our language, nor any advance in understanding the original, since that time?

WHETHER an edition or editions might not be printed without the present divisions into chapter and verse; which are known to be of modern date, and, though of use to be retained in some for the sake of references, do very much disturb the sense and disfigure the book? The best editions of the original are usually without them; or at most have only a set of figures down the margin: and those editions are well worth a young man's purchasing, who would study the Holy Scriptures with profit. What the learned are allowed to do in every other language, could not be improper to be allowed in our own, for the sake of the unlearned; who see no other book so disgustingly and unprofitably mangled as this, which ought surely to be presented to them in the most intelligible and inviting form.

HAVING now gone through those portions of the Scriptures which are appointed in the service of our Church; it comes next in course to consider the FAITH that is deduced from them, before we proceed to the FORMS OF DEVOTION in consequence of that Faith. And here in the first place it may be asked,

WHETHER there can be any occasion for more Creeds than one?

Perhaps it might admit of a question, whether it be necessary or proper to have *any* Creed at all introduced into a form of public devotion. For a congregation assembled voluntarily for worship and instruction, to be called upon to pronounce a *Skibboleth*, and thereby to exclude any from joining in worship, who would be willing to join in it; and to exclude them from the benefit of instruction, who would be willing to be taught; should seem impolitic as well as unchristian. But waving that (which is perhaps a singular opinion, as it seems to clash with the practice of very early days), it may be asked; what necessity, what use, what propriety, in having *many* Creeds? And then secondly,

WHETHER that which goes by the name of the Apostles (and is certainly the first; though generally allowed not to be written by them or any of them) and is now thought sufficient for Baptism, be not sufficient for every purpose that can be called *good*? And to this a third question may be added,

WHETHER these passages following, "he descended
"into hell;" the "holy catholic church;"
the "communion of saints;" and the "resur-
"rection of the *body*," or "the *flesh*," instead
of "the *dead*;" be of the earliest date in this
Creed itself? Whether the time of their inser-
tion might not be traced? Whether they are
intelligible to the unlearned, and not liable to
be

be misunderstood? Whether there can be any necessity to retain all or any of these propositions: and whether some of them have any determinate meaning; and others do not tend a little towards Popery? But, however that be, WHETHER the use of the Nicene Creed (which, as it now stands, was not made at the Council of Nice), and the Athanasian (which was not composed by Athanasius), might not and ought not to be wholly discontinued?

The questions above, naturally lead us to a farther enquiry; which, though not an *object* in the last century, is become a *capital one* in this.

WHETHER it be right to insert into a public Liturgy any points of doubtful disputation?

Whether it would not be more christian, as being more charitable, to relax in some which we believe and of which others doubt; than to pin down our worship to such forms as we perhaps can scarcely believe ourselves?

WHETHER the doctrine of the *Trinity*, as particularized in our Liturgy, and running through the greatest part of it; while objected to by some, doubted by most, and understood by none; ought to stand any longer as it does? Whether the expressions concerning it, ought not to be softened throughout, or confined to scripture phrases?

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With respect to that doctrine; as it regards the Object of our worship, it is indeed a fundamental one; but it ought therefore to be handled most carefully and dispassionately. We should receive with reverence that information concerning it, which has been delivered to us; and leave it in that obscurity in which God has been pleased to leave it: neither going beyond Scripture in any public forms, to favour the Athanasian or the Arian or any other *hypothesis*; nor explaining away the express words of Scripture, to reduce the incomprehensible nature or essence of God to a level with our shallow understandings. Scripture ought to be the guide of our *studies* in the plainest as well as the most abstruse matters; and (at least in our *practice*) the clear should take place of the less clear. And since no precept in Scripture can be more clearly delivered, or more plainly essential and fundamental among christians, than the duty of mutual charity and forbearance; we ought not to make the express "commandment of God of none effect" by our traditionary interpretations; and by our unnecessary definitions of what is less clear, and deductions from what God has imperfectly revealed, break the unity of the church of Christ. Every man *must* be allowed to understand every doctrine according to the measure of comprehension that God has given him; (it cannot be otherwise;) and no man or set of men ought to obtrude their sense upon another. We all know that there

is but "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all;" and "one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus;" and that "whatsoever we shall ask the Father in Christ's name, he will give it us;" and that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities:" In this we are all agreed. And we all know, that we are baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost;" by the command of Christ himself*. But *how* to explain all the difficulties that have been started concerning each; and to reconcile a *Trinity* of persons, with the known *Unity* of the divine nature; is certainly more than has been revealed, and perhaps more than ever will be known to us. It is submitted therefore to your consideration,

WHETHER all *human explanations* of what we confessedly do not understand, and all allusions

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to

* This last, it is thought, may be stated as a text we all know to be a command of Christ; notwithstanding the confident assertion of a late author, on "the Doctrines of a Trinity and the Incarnation of God;" who says, that "every man of the least critical knowledge in sacred literature, must be satisfied it is of very doubtful authority." On what authority does he say this? The passage is in every manuscript. And no critic or commentator, that the Author of these Queries has ever met with, or can hear of, has ever doubted it: excepting one writer among the Unitarian tracts; who after producing his arguments on both sides, concludes for its authenticity; and only questions the consequences that have by some been deduced from it.

to and deductions from such explanations, ought not to be removed entirely from a Form of Public Worship?

WHETHER the *Unity* of the Godhead be not the grand point that runs through the whole of the Scriptures, from the one end to the other?

WHETHER the Revelations to the Patriarchs did not inculcate this? Whether the visible guidance of the God of Israel, and the inspiration renewed from time to time to the Prophets under the Old Covenant, were not designed *professedly* to keep or recall *that people* to the acknowledgment of the *One true God*: As the descent from heaven, or at least the visible appearance of Christ in the human nature, and the visible descent of the Holy Ghost and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, under the New covenant, have been to recall *all nations* from Polytheism and Idolatry, to the worship of the *One true God in spirit and in truth*?

WHETHER after this; after all these gracious manifestations of God to mankind, to instruct them in the *unity* and *perfection* and absolute *sovereignty* of his nature, it be right for the learned by their subtilties to mislead the unlearned, or to suffer them to be misled, into a *doubt* whether there be not *Three Gods*?

WHETHER all addresses to the Trinity, either separately or conjointly, however understood by the learned as *Dij majores* or *Dij minorum gentium*, must not lead the unlearned into the *belief* that there *are* Three Gods?

WHETHER then; as no such addresses are ordered in Scripture; as prayer is ordered to be offered up to God the Father in the name of Christ; as there is no command for any prayers or addresses being offered even to Christ as our intercessor (for though it should seem that might be allowable, yet we cannot affirm that it is); and as there is no warrant direct or indirect, implied or otherwise, to authorise any addresses whatsoever to the Holy Ghost; it might not be right, it might not be christian, it might not be most conformable with the known and express command of Christ himself, to "have love one towards another;" and to lay aside that practice, of which we ourselves scarcely know that it is *right*, for the sake of those who are persuaded (however mistaken they may be thought in that persuasion) that it is *wrong*?

WHETHER, on this same account, and for these same reasons, all declarations in our service that have any tendency to confound the ideas of the congregation, and to mislead them into the
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the fancy that there *can be Three* Gods, be not of dangerous consequence, and ought not to be discarded accordingly?

WHETHER we can prove more than *One* to be *Supreme*? And whether all our addresses should not in fact be; to "God the Father, by the
"Mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ,
"for the heavenly assistance of the Holy
"Ghost;" as our Church herself expresses it in her office for the ordination of Priests?

WHETHER therefore, the *Amendments* proposed some years ago by the late *Dr. Clarke* in his Prayer-Book; which are framed on this model (and to which all may now have access; the original being given lately by the public spirit of his worthy son to the British Museum) might not be adopted, as the *foundation* of amendments at present; since no man ever studied that subject more dispassionately, or was better read in the Scriptures, or was ever endowed with greater abilities for such a work, than he?

WHETHER this, (or *something* at least of the like kind) be not *necessary* at present; and a proper condescension to the sentiments (weaknesses or errors if you please to call them so) of others?

TO these, which appear essential improvements, (essential both to *edification* and christian *charity*) a few more questions may be added.

WHETHER there be any propriety in the so frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer, as it is now at times appointed; whether it does not approach to the *βαρτολογία* condemned by our Saviour, and to the Beads which we condemn in the Romish church?

WHETHER in the common Morning and Evening service, the second time that it occurs [after the Creed] it might not be omitted: And whenever two or more services are used together, as is very frequent in large parishes, whether the reciting any prayer more than once be not superfluous and even improper?

WHETHER on the Sunday and Holiday mornings, whereon two or three distinct services, designed originally for different hours, now follow in immediate succession, it might not be advisable to reduce them into one form: leaving them still nearly as they are, for those places where they continue to be used apart?

Or,

WHETHER when the second service is read, the Collect of the day need be recited where it first

first occurs? And whether on all Litany days, it might not be most proper, after the Creed, to call the attention of the congregation as at present, by the words "Let us pray," and to proceed immediately to the Litany itself; which fully contains, or might contain, the substance of those Collects that would be omitted; and would thus be a more entire form, than after having begun one method of worship, by a sudden and abrupt transiſion, to begin again anew in another manner?

The Invocation in the beginning of the Litany, it ſhould ſeem, would thus be a natural following of the Creed; and an addreſs

— to God the Father Almighty to have mercy upon us miſerable ſinners;

— to God, who by his only begotten Son hath redeemed the world, to have mercy, &c. and

— to God, who by his Holy Spirit doth help our infirmities, to have mercy, &c.

would be parallel to what we now have in our Catechiſm, as what we learn by that Creed.

Perhaps in the Litany, thoſe two paſſages, "By the myſtery, &c." and "By thine agony, &c." had better be omitted; as favouring too much of myſtical incantation. And if a little farther ſhortening of the Service be thought proper, it is ſubmitted to conſideration, whether all from "Son of God we beſeech thee to hear us," to "graciously

“ ourly hear us O Christ, graciously hear us O Lord Christ,” inclusive, might not be left out; as the prayer following (at least by the addition of a very few words) would contain in fact the greatest part of the preceding.

This, it is presumed, would make a compact, and sufficiently full, and not too long Form of Christian Worship: which on Sunday mornings, might be distinguished from what is called here the Second Service, by singing a Psalm.

In the *Second Service*, which when it is used as a Communion might perhaps better be used alone, and when not used as such might be read from the desk, it is referred to your consideration;

WHETHER there can be any occasion to begin with the Lord's Prayer; which in one case will come afterwards, and in the other has occurred before; and whether the Collect as it now stands, would not be a proper introduction to the Commandments; if any introduction be so proper as the words of God alone?

WHETHER this Service be not the fittest place wherein to commemorate the day, whether a particular Sunday or other Holiday; and, without interrupting the Lessons in their course, and by choosing Epistles and Gospels suitable, if they be not so already; or by fuller Collects, if that shall be thought ne-

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cessary;

cessary; to do it *only* here: unless perhaps by proper Psalms or Lessons for particular Festivals?

WHETHER, the Nicene Creed being omitted, the Prayer for the Church Militant might not be introduced in its place; because in country parishes where there is but one person to officiate, it cannot be read after the sermon? Perhaps a short blessing might follow it, to conclude that Service.

Then, after another Psalm sung, naturally would succeed the Sermon; as a *Third Service* entrusted entirely to the Preacher's discretion; And concerning this it may be asked;

WHETHER it can be necessary for him here to testify his Loyalty, which is better shewn or tried elsewhere; or to recite the Lord's Prayer; but instead of connivance, whether he might not be authorized to lay aside the bidding Form, and before the sermon to offer up a Prayer in his own person, for himself or his congregation; that he may be enabled to dispense the Word of God faithfully, and that they may thankfully receive it and steadfastly practise it; or such other prayer as he shall think most suitable to the occasion: and after the sermon, to conclude from the pulpit, with a short

a short Collect or two at his discretion, and a Blessing?

IN the *Communion Service*, and all the *Occasional Offices*, as well as the preceding, it is submitted to the public,

WHETHER the Amendments of Dr. Clarke might not *in general* be admitted; with or without farther improvements as shall be judged proper? Perhaps the Corrections proposed in 1689 might be considered by those in whose hands they are; and some of them inserted, when softened according to Dr. Clarke's pattern. To this *general* one, may it be allowable to add a few farther Queries?

WHETHER, in any part of the Service, and even in receiving the Holy Communion itself, any particular posture need be *prescribed* to the congregation? The proposed amendments of 1689, it is said, left it at liberty to administer the Communion even in the pews; as it is now practised in some of our Inns of Court: There was a time when all kneeling was forbidden between Easter and Whitsuntide. Why then *prescribe* the one or the other? A *recommendation* of what is esteemed most decent, would usually be attended to.

WHETHER in relation to the Office of Baptism, there need be any exception made against the

Parents' standing as Sureties ; since they alone can have a right to fulfil, what they promise to teach or see taught ?

WHETHER the use of the Cross in that service, or the Ring in Matrimony, might not be left at discretion : i. e. omitted, if the parties desire it ?

WHETHER some regulation be not wanted concerning Baptism in private houses ; to allow, what is often found necessary to be done ? And whether there might not be some form for the receiving of adults, who were baptized privately in their infancy, and ask to be received after they are grown up ? It is sometimes desired ; and cannot be refused : yet is there no office at present for it.

WHETHER the reading of the Absolution in the ordinary service, might not be allowed to Deacons as well as Priests ? Or perhaps it may admit of a doubt, whether *this* was ever intended to be restrained to Priests alone ?

WHETHER any High titles, even those belonging to his Majesty himself, be proper to be used in a form of worship to God ?

WHETHER some few obsolete words, and expressions now become uncouth, might not better be altered for such as are less exceptionable?

WHETHER there be any propriety in retaining the Vigils, as appointed in our Prayer-Book?

WHETHER a few Prayers might not be added to the Collection, besides those from the Visitation Office, to be chosen as suited to the occasion, when any desire the prayers of the congregation; instead of the few words that are inserted very awkwardly and unfeelingly at present; and which are not directed to be inserted at all when the Litany is read?

WHETHER something of the like kind might not be done for those who desire to return thanks, to be used after the General Thanksgiving; instead of breaking into that very fine prayer with a few very unmeaning words?

WHETHER one Prayer of that sort, the same or perhaps a little fuller than what now stands at the end of the Office of Churching, might not supersede the continuance of that Office? And whether the Offerings on that occasion might not be discontinued along with it: or at least no direction about them left to stand in our service-book?

WHETHER the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, does not require a fuller Rubric; to assist the younger clergy, who know not at first how far they may or may not depart from that Form: whereas that part of their function, being no part of public worship, ought and indeed must be left at discretion?

WHETHER at the Burial of the dead, some direction might not be given about carrying the body into the church, or otherwise? And whether that passage which has been so often objected to, concerning our "sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," being said indiscriminately over all persons, does not want an alteration or explanation to satisfy those who object? That all will be raised to eternal life, is but the general consequence of Christ's death and resurrection: but that all will be happy in that eternal life, cannot be said, and therefore cannot be meant here; since that must depend upon their behaviour in this.

WHETHER the Commination be of any use, or rather whether it be not a disgrace to our discipline, at present?

WHETHER the Offices for State-holidays be not much too long; and a *farrago* sometimes of odd

odd composition, to say no worse of one in particular? And whether one compact form might not supply the place of all: to be used, not on the Accession but Coronation of the reigning prince; the Accession being too nearly an approach to rejoicing on the decease of the predecessor?

Whether the Singing Psalms might not be better regulated; and power given to the incumbent to restrain irregularities, where persons are not inclined to follow advice?

HAVING now gone through our LITURGY, and stated such particulars in it as appeared to require consideration; I must beg leave to add a few more Queries concerning DISCIPLINE.

Here it might occur to an inquisitive man, WHETHER our Ecclesiastical Laws are such as it could be wished they were? Whether they are not such as Chance rather than Prudence made them; and many of them of Popish origin? However; since that matter belongs entirely to our Rulers, and we may amend ourselves whether our laws oblige us to it or not; and our canons, though ordered to be read yearly in our churches, are never read there, and cannot always be put in force; it concerns not a private man to enquire about them,

them, any farther than they are enforced for the establishment of *Uniformity* among us. Here then we may enquire very pertinently,

WHETHER what is now called the Declaration of Conformity, appointed by the Act of 13 Cha. II. be not fully sufficient to that end? Or whether the words might not run thus, with an additional clause; "I do declare that I will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England, as it is now by law established; unless in such particulars wherein my Diocesan shall order otherwise?"

WHETHER such a power given to the Bishops, might not be proper; who would be presumed to use it with discretion, (or might be under superior controul, if that could be supposed requisite), but who must sometimes find occasions, where, from the peculiar circumstances of a parish, the age or infirmity of the incumbent, they could wish to be able to allow of a little deviation from the prescribed form.

When the author of these papers lived in a parish, where through custom the parishioners could not be induced to attend any but the Sundays' evening service, he wished he might be allowed to read a second lesson out of the Gospels at

Evening

Evening Prayers; and, not being willing to do it on his sole authority, asked his Diocesan whether he might not transpose the second lessons in the Morning and Evening services. He knew his Lordship had not power to authorize it; but hoped it might have been connived at, from the little change that would have made, and the manifest advantage it would have been to his flock. This case would not happen, if the Calendar were altered as above proposed: but it is apprehended it could be of no bad consequence, to entrust their Lordships with some such power, for other the like cases; as a clergyman, when he has once declared he will conform, cannot answer it to his conscience to depart from it beyond what the laws allow.

WHETHER such a Declaration would not be a very ample security to *Uniformity*; without requiring from every minister, an express approbation of the whole contents of the Liturgy?

WHETHER a few additional prayers being inserted; and an *option* given between them, and between such and such Psalms or Portions of Scripture; might not reconcile those to the use of a Liturgy, who have long declared against *prescribed* Forms?

WHETHER we ought not to do this, and *more if*
 F *necessary,*

necessary, for the sake of those who differ from us?

WHETHER, for the admission of those as Ministers in our church, of whose ordination we doubt; it might not be right to avoid distinctions; and to admit *none* from any other Communion whatsoever, without a re-ordination according to our own (amended) form; and then to admit *all* hypothetically, “if thou hast not already received it;” as we now do where we doubt of Baptism?

WHETHER the old custom of asking the Banns before Ordination might not be revived; and our Ordinations be made more solemn, by being made more public? And whether the printing those offices in all our Prayer-Books, might not likewise be of service; that all might know what promises we make, and might see that we do make some, and that there is a solemn form of ordination in our church: whereas it is but too true that many now are ignorant of it, and on the contrary are persuaded that we have no form at all?

WHETHER, after a person's having been carefully examined by his Diocesan, and regularly ordained in consequence of that examination; that which is called above, the Third Service entrusted

entrusted to the discretion of the Minister, might not be left *entirely* to his discretion, as a Minister of God's Word; without confining him previously, or afterwards, by any Articles or Formularies of Man's device? If he makes a wrong use of that discretion; by confounding his Flock with disputable matters, or such as shall be thought improper to be handled in the Pulpit, or by "handling the Word of God deceitfully;" his Diocesan might reprimand him first, might bind him down afterwards to a better behaviour, or silence him *entirely* or for a season from preaching in our churches, and command him to read instead such as he shall appoint of the many excellent Discourses we now have in print, or might deprive him at last if he be found incorrigible. Something of this kind, it is apprehended, would be a better Security to our Church, and a more reasonable kind of Government, than the present: such as we now must use in case of his preaching sedition, or in case he should unfortunately become insane.

WHETHER some such Methods as the above, would not *sufficiently* secure Uniformity of Worship, and even Uniformity of Doctrine in our Church; without seeking after Uniformity of

Opinion; which never was, nor ever can possibly be obtained?

WHETHER, after such a security established for the Pulpit; the Press might not be free, as it is to all other ranks of men in their departments, so also to the Clergy in theirs; to deliver their sentiments on Religious Matters without restraint, and to enquire freely after the Truth; since free enquiries are the only way to arrive at it?

WHETHER the present method be *in fact* an approach in any degree to equal security? Whether our declarations of assent to every thing contained in our Liturgy; whether our repeated subscriptions to Liturgy and Articles and human Formularies, have any *good* effect; or are considered, either by ourselves or the by-stander, as of *any* use “for the avoiding of diversities of opinions?”

WHETHER indeed, they have not naturally, and are not by experience found to have, a *bad* tendency?

WHETHER then, all such Subscriptions and Declarations might not henceforward *safely* be laid aside?

WHETHER,

WHETHER, while our Ecclesiastical Laws and Constitution remain in force; while our Prelates retain their power, and that degree of affluence which is due to them and is necessary to their station; while our Liturgy remains a standard of uniform worship, and is conformed to by our clergy; while the Pulpit is kept under a decent and gospel-like regulation; there can be any thing more required to a RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT?

WHETHER, in a Religion that is of *divine origin*, every thing that goes beyond this, be not an *invasion of the Province of God*; and in the Christian Religion, an invasion of the Province of *Christ*?

WHETHER we must not suppose that the concerns and welfare of *his Church*, must be among the first of his regards?

WHETHER he has not *promised* that it shall be so, to the end of the world?

WHETHER *He* is not the proper law-maker in his own kingdom? and whether the simplicity of the Gospel at its first promulgation, was not of great assistance, under God, towards its propagation?

WHETHER

WHETHER the making any thing an Article of Faith, be not either making a new law, or precluding all enquiry concerning the old: and therefore destroying the simplicity of the Gospel; and counter-acting, as far as in us lies, all advancement in the knowledge of that very point which we suppose or pretend to be of importance?

WHETHER the freedom of enquiry into God's laws ought to be restrained? and whether the Ministers of his Word ought to be abridged by others, or *can* indeed really abridge themselves by any subscription whatsoever, of the power committed to them; and of "that liberty" in preaching the Gospel of Christ, "wherewith He hath made them free?"

WHETHER the *fear* of granting them that liberty, out of an apprehension for the Church's safety, be not a distrust either of the *Purity of our Church*, or of the *Providence of God over HIS*?

WHETHER then, lastly, such a liberty ought not *freely to be granted*; and, laying aside superstitious fears, a *real confidence* be shewn, in the paternal care and providence of God, in the promised presence and protection of Christ, in the guidance and heavenly assistance of the Holy Spirit, in all which we *profess*

*to believe; and without which, the Policy of
Man will ever prove in vain?*

THUS have I particularized *my Wish* as much as the most inquisitive can desire; and certainly far more than would otherwise have become a private man; who indeed has these subjects much at heart, and never would decline any pains he could bestow on so righteous a task, but at the same time is sensible how very unequal he is to it. All he shall say in farther vindication of what he has proposed, is only this:—to his Superiors; let them forgive his invading their Province when thus called to it;—to the Learned; let them perfect what he has begun, or do it better;—to Cavillers; let them shew as christian a Spirit.

And now in conclusion give me leave to ask, whether this be a *Catholic* wish? an *Apostolic* wish? Whether it be not a more *Gospel-like* behaviour; to propose in a decent and respectful manner a Revival of our Forms, in the hope of their amendment; than after having multiplied Creeds, and subdivided and subtilized opinions, and “bound heavy
“burthens and grievous to be borne, and laid
“them on men’s shoulders,” however grievous we perceive them to be to others, “never to
“attempt to move them with one of our fingers?”

Let it not be thought a matter of small concern, whether this distress, so repeatedly complained of, be removed from your Clergy; the disgrace of its
con-

continuance from your Church: It is surely of no little importance to them; and to every member in it. Your clergy ought not only to be free from *equivocation*, but free from the suspicion of it: and however they may reconcile their Subscriptions and Declarations among themselves; it is with difficulty they can do it, and with reluctance they must comply: and the suspicion of that reluctance, cannot but obstruct the efficacy of their instructions, while their flocks can read and can think.

It is not, indeed it is not, a matter of small moment, whether those things which give offense in our service-book be removed. To those indeed who rarely appear at Divine worship, or who do not attend to what is doing there, they certainly may be matters of indifference; and it is no wonder that such persons should be so unwilling to move what is settled, or to propose a Commission to enquire into them: but they are as certainly matters of the highest import to those who do pay attention to their Duty. Whatever, in a Prayer, requires an explanation in a man's mind to accompany the words he pronounces; calls-off his attention, and checks his devotion. Whatever he knows gives offense to others present; must grieve every christian; every honest heart. When his Congregation hear him address himself separately to *three distinct Gods*; and give all honour and glory, and equal honour and glory to each; how can he expect them to believe him, when he tells them there

there is *but one God*; or to suppose that he believes the Scriptures, which tell him and them the same truth? When he talks in their presence about the *sins of a new-born infant* brought to Baptism; how can he dehort them afterwards from sin, whom he could be happy to make as sin-less as the child before their eyes? When he tells them, that “if they receive the Holy Communion unworthily, they are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour, and eat and drink their own *damnation*,” how can he invite them to the Lord’s Table with any prospect of success? (Though they be the words of an Apostle; if such words must be chosen, their explanation should go along with them). When he is appointed to read a Chapter in their ears, which is scarce intelligible in his own; how can he expect or hope they should profit by it? will he not desire to alter it; or wish that he might be allowed to turn over leaf to another? These things he must feel, who attends to the Ministry of the *Gospel*; and wishes and endeavours to profit his Flock.

But when he finds, that some too-curious explanations in our Service-book, and allusions to matters at best very doubtful, do keep away his Parishioners, or are made by them a pretence for their staying away; when things confessedly indifferent, are not left indifferent, but are imposed by our Church and retained in Her worship though she knows they are objected to: When he per-

ecives, that, without *destroying* or even *endangering* the whole, a little Alteration would suffice; or even only a little Latitude given him, or given to his Diocesan to allow him as he should be found to use it, would be the means of reconciling multitudes to our Service; would ease their minds, and satisfy their scruples; would comfort him, and edify his flock; will he not plead in earnest for such Alterations, such a Latitude, or such Amendments? When he sees, or thinks he sees, our Church on the brink of destruction, if *something* be not done to relieve her; will he not strain every nerve and appeal to every heart, and stir up all in power to get it done? Is this turbulence? Is this faction? Is this heresy or schism? or can it be called by any other opprobrious name? Say, — Where is the mighty *crime* in such an attempt? Let any man that has ever had a Cure, and read our present Articles with any attention in the ears of his new parishioners, lay his hand to his heart, and say, whether he has not wished to read something more profitable? Let any man that has ever had a Flock, and attended to that Flock, say, whether he has not wished for their sakes to see some things in our Service rectified? And if he has wished thus; nay more, if he is persuaded that an Amendment of these matters would be serviceable to the edifying of his people; will he not, *ought he not* to desire it? and in every reasonable, every prudent, every respectful method, apply to every one in

AUTHORITY ; and implore their concurrence in bringing it to perfection ?

But—I need say no more to ingenuous minds : While narrow ones will always be found to defend every established Error, and indolent ones to delay every Reformation, till Judgement overtakes them ; may *You* see the *necessity of Amendment*, while our day of Grace lasts. And may You forgive this call to it (perhaps the last call) from one of the least of Your Brethren ; and pardon me the warmth which such a Cause inspires ; remembering that it is the Cause of GOD, the GOD OF TRUTH, “ whose I “ am, and whom I serve,” and whom above all human laws I *must* obey, as

A Minister of the Gospel of Christ.

F I N I S.

at night : and explore their conscience in
bringing it to perfection ?

But—I need no more to incite your minds :

While narrow ones will always be found to delay

every established error, and indolence to delay

every reformation, till judgment overtakes them :

may I see the necessity of haste, while our day

of Grace lasts. And may You forgive this call to

it (perhaps the last call) from one of the last of

Your Brethren : and pardon the weakness which

such a Cause inspires : remembering that it is the

Cause of God, the God of Truth, " whose I

" am, and whom I love, and whom above all



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F I N I S